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AUTHOR Brown, Grace Carolyn
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ABSTRACT

An innovative strategic planning process was developed at Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) to identify and implement projects that would yield benefits to the college and the community in the coming years. After an analysis of the economic and social characteristics of Northeastern Ohio and a resource audit of the college's fiscal, physical, and human resouces, 11 administrators and faculty members were selected to form the Strategic Educational Planning Advisory Committee (SEPAC). The charge of SEPAC was to identify innovative projects that would fit the scope and mission of the college, be new ventures, be based on identified needs, and be within CCC's capacity to implement. Of the 25 projects submitted by members of the committee, 4 strategic goals were recommended as most appropriate: (1) a program to initiate advanced technology delivery systems to provide instructional programs to new populations; (2) a summer and weekend college to address the needs of nontraditional students desiring job-entry or upgraded job skills; (3) a National Youth Demonstration Center to enhance retention and enroll new students between 16 to 24 years of age; and (4) a Career Assessment and Change Center which would serve students and employees in enhancing or changing careers. The fiscal investment in these strategic targets will provide a productive base for economic revitalization and job training. (HB)

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STRATEGIC PLANNING IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT: FOCUS ON EDUCATION

by

Dr. Grace Carolyn Brown
Vice President for Educational Planning and Development
Cuyahoga Community College
700 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

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STRATEGIC PLANNING IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT: FOCUS ON EDUCATION

When ancient map-makers plotted beyond known areas, they left that part of the map blank, called it terra incognita, and filled the empty space with fictitious sea monsters. The future is terra incognita, but unlike map makers and explorers, educational institutions have no choice but to sail into it. Anxiety replaces the sea monsters.

All planning, presumably, is future directed. The often-seen "planning for the future" is unfortunately a redundant phase, but it is invoked out of the recognition that planning is often past directed, disregarding the possibility (and contingencies) for change. As a result, such planning reflects "single loop" thinking and does not invite change. Clearly the need is evident for planning methods that ensure growth and change, particularly now that the expansion era of higher education draws to a close. Such a planning method is strategic educational planning, which while not new to Cuyahoga Community College and, in fact, a source of previous planning efforts of the executive leadership of the College, was recently implemented in a thorough and systematic manner unique outside the private sector.

A comprehensive strategic educational planning process has been taking place since the beginning of the 1982 fiscal year. In July, 1981, staff from the Office of the President and the Office of the Vice President for Educational Planning and Development underwent a series of training sessions to learn about and plan for a strategic educational planning method to be implemented in time for the FY 1983 resource allocation. During the summer months following, the staff of the Vice President developed the "Environmental Scan Update, 1981" and the "Internal Resource Audit." During the fall, the Strategic Educational Planning Advisory Committee (SEPAC) was formed to review the staff documents and discuss possible growth opportunities for the College. The eleven-member committee, made up of faculty and administrators from the three campuses and UMDI, met during October and November. To assist the committee, the "Environmental Scan Update" and the "Internal Resource Audit" were assembled in a workbook with:

- The Committee Charge,
- The Strategic Educational Planning Design Document, and
- Issues and Opportunities

The intent of SEPAC, and the workbook provided to its members, was to identify strategic opportunities; that is, a limited number of projects that, if invested in now, would yield benefits to the College for the next several years and beyond. Committee members submitted over twenty-five proposed strategic targets and opportunities.

The selection of strategic opportunities was guided by the following criteria: (1) the opportunity should fit the scope and mission of Cuyahoga Community College; (2) the opportunity should be a new venture rather than just the refinement of a current service; (3) the prospects for success should be based upon an awareness of the external demands and constraints affecting the proposed strategic opportunity; and finally (4) the proposal should be designed to match the College's capacity to implement. These four criteria were used as a way of testing the proposed strategic ideas. The committee, in short asked of each proposed idea:

- Is it new business?
- Is it our business?
- Is it needed?
- Can we do it?

The committee reviewed the staff papers that included an overview of the external social and economic conditions of the Cleveland area and a brief "inventory" of the College's capacities. It then critiqued each submitted strategic idea against the four criteria, the above four questions. From that process four recommended strategic goals emerged as potentially the most rewarding. In brief statements the recommended goals are as follows.

1. State-of-the-Art Instructional Delivery Systems. To initiate new thrusts in advanced technology delivery systems such as television, computer, and interactive systems to deliver instructional programs to new populations for both on-campus and distant learning sites.

2. Summer and Weekend College. To attract new students for whom (1) the traditional educational cycle is too lengthy to facilitate timely entry or re-entry into the job market, or (2) the scheduling of existing courses is incompatable with employment or personal obligations.

3. National Youth Demonstration Center. To identify and implement instructional and student development processes that will enhance current student retention as well as new student enrollment among 16-24 year old out-ofschool youth from "affected" or "blighted" urban areas.

4. The Career Assessment and Change Center. To create a comprehensive College-wide Career Assessment and change Center which would serve students, staff, and educational, business, and vocational community employees to enhance or change their careers.

It is important to consider, by the way, that the ideas generated by the process that did not muster the designation as "strategic" were nonetheless followed up by the staff of the Vice President's Office in concert with SEPAC members and those faculty and administrators in the College most appropriate for planning and operating the new suggestions.

Implementation steps must now follow. Those operational improvements which can be realized with no additional funds are discussed at the invitation of the staff of the Vice President for Educational Planning and Development with lead campus staff.

In addition, those strategic goals that are approved by the President will have the first funds allocated as part of the 1983 fiscal year budget plan. This is an important consideration: the Strategic Educational Planning Process was executed with the purpose of committing funds through the contemporary resource allocation and budgeting processes. The strategic goal or goals for FY 1983 will have a greater chance for full implementation by virtue of the funds committed to them than by the intrinsic appeal of their potential.

Strategic Goals FY 83: Recommendations to the President describes the process for strategic educational planning and the four recommended strategic goals generated by that process.

The Strategic Educational Planning Process (SEPP) at Cuyahoga Community College included the development by the Office of the Vice President for Educational Planning and Development of the SEPP Workbooks containing (1) a guide to strategic planning; (2) an environmental scan of the economic and social characteristics of Northeastern Ohio; (3) an internal resource audit of the College's fiscal, physical, and human resources; and (4) a summary issues and opportunities paper highlighting information of the scan and audit.

Eleven members of the College from both faculty and administration of the three campuses and UMDI were chosen for the Strategic Educational Planning Advisory Committee (SEPAC). The charge to the committee requested that its members (a) review the design document for strategic planning, the scan, and the audit, and (b) submit suggested strategic goals for the College to be reviewed by all the members of the Committee and the Office of the Vice President. The members of the committee responded enthusiastically, submitting over twenty-five suggested strategic goals. Through a decision logic process, the suggestions were narrowed to four, now designated, recommended Strategic Goals FY 83.

The four recommended strategic goals are:

STATE-OF-THE-ART INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Goal

To initiate new thrusts in advanced technology delivery systems such as television, computer and interactive systems to deliver instructional programs to new populations for both on-campus and distant learning sites.

Objectives

- To develop an initial instructional television delivery system to 10 selected sites and existing cable television companies with potential for expansion to delivery television programming to any site within Cuyahoga County and any additional cable companies.

- To implement pilot interacting computing and television course delivery methods for both on-campus and distant learning sites as an entree into the long-range implications for advanced technology.

- To develop a sequence of courses directed toward the use of microcomputers in the small business environment.

SUMMER AND WEEKEND COLLEGE

Goal

To attract new students from whom 1) the traditional educational cycle is too lengthy to facilitate timely entry or reentry into the job market, or 2) traditional methods of course scheduling are incompatible with employment or personal obligations.

Objectives

- To offer intensive weekend educational experiences to provide students with viable job entry skills or skills upgrading.

- To offer an intensive summer educational experience to provide students with job entry or reentry skills or skills upgrading.

- To offer a Weekend College for elders centered on credit courses of interest and benefit to elders.

- To offer a summer honors program for youth to provide opportunities for "trial entry" into program areas or advanced work in a preselected program.

NATIONAL YOUTH DEMONSTRATION CENTER

Goal

To identify and implement instructional and student development processes that will enhance current student retention as well as new student enrollment among 16-24 year old out-of-school youth from "affected" or "blighted" urban areas.

Objectives

- To provide opportunity for faculty revitalization toward teaching with out-of-school youth with special educational needs.

- To establish a youth development institute aimed at providing a comprehensive and integrated array of services necessary for career planning and pursuit for youth with special emotional, social, educational and economic needs.

THE CAREER ASSESSMENT AND CHANGE CENTER

Goal

To create a comprehensive College-wide Career Assessment and Change Center which would serve students, staff, and educational, business, and vocational community employees seeking to enhance or change their careers.

Objectives

- To develop and purchase a comprehensive set of basic skills assessment instruments to measure effectively students' basic skills level of development and learning styles.
- To provide comprehensive career and vocational interest assessment designed to assist students in career decision making.
- To administer psychological and diagnostic inventories to assist students and others in better understanding their strengths and career options.
- To conduct career assessment and change seminars and workshops.

Each of the four recommended strategic goals is fully explained in the document so that implementation concerns and expected results are clear. Costs are assigned at this point to make this document useful for the current FY 83 resource allocation process. At the beginning of this project, it was projected that Strategic Targets of Opportunities would require about one percent of the FY 83 operating budget. The proposed budgets of the four recommended strategic goals total $335,935, well within the projected one percent.

BUDGET

State-of-the Art Instructional Delivery Systems	$125,000
Summer and Weekend College	80,435
National Youth Demonstration Center	80,500
Career Assessment and Change Center	50,000
Total	$335,935

As has been discussed before, strategic educational planning is concerned with growth and new ideas. This set of four goals indeed represents targets of opportunity for Cuyahoga Community College. They are a small investment in the future for thousands in Cuyahoga County.

The Strategic Educational Planning Process was designed to parallel the resource allocation process so both could share in structuring the budget for Fiscal year 1983. This has been accomplished, and it is no small accomplishment; strategic planning has taken place with resource implications in mind. The College is now in a position of selecting investment targets at the beginning of a resource allocation for the fiscal year beginning six months in the future. Such planning exemplifies the kind of management higher education (and the public sector in general) must do to survive the 1980's.

Therefore, the next step in the Strategic Educational Planning Process is the selection of those recommendations that the President and Board of Trustees consider worthy of receiving some "venture capital" to enable implementation, evaluation, and further development of the proposed programs. Once the recommendations are acted upon and resources are committed, steps can be taken to develop concrete plans to realize the potential of the strategic opportunities identified by the Strategic Educational Planning Process. Those steps include such activities as the assignment of staff, particularly a project manager responsible for program development and implementation, budget management, and periodic reporting of results to--in most cases--the Vice President for Educational Planning and Development. In addition, schedules and milestones need to be established. In some cases, an advisory committee must be assembled, and an internal task force may be created to assist the process of implementation. Finally, evaluation measures must be completed.

The four recommended strategic goals share several common qualities. In fact, seeing the four goals as a unity offers a picture of Cuyahoga Community College's role in the economic and social structure of the Greater Cleveland area. The Weekend College, the Career Assessment and Change Center, and the State-of-the-Art Delivery Systems provide a stage for economic revitalization strategies and the re-tooling of the workforce for both the industrial base of Cleveland and the emerging service occupations demanding skilled workers. The youth development program plays a vital role in economic revitalization strategies.

Investments in these strategic targets will form a productive base from which can be built a more flexible and responsive training and education system to accommodate the working adult whose lack of skills or outmoded skills threaten his livelihood and compromise his productivity. On a larger scale, the recommended strategic goals are the College's contributions to regional and state wide economic revitalization strategies, on which community colleges have the potential for significant influence.

Implementation of the recommended strategic goals will commit the College to growth in two significant ways. One, we will be investing in human resources. Similar to the recent suggestions of Mr. Donald Hoyt, Assistant Professor of Community Mental Health Technology, that the College should supply employee assistance through a Human Resources Development service, the strategic goals recommended a human resources development service for the citizens of the county. The proposed Career Assessment and Change Center is a resource for employers, government leaders, and business leaders in designing new, as well as phasing out old, economic

ventures. In the implementation of the Career Assessment and Change Center, employers would pay for the services offered to their employees. Career change services may become a legitimate fringe benefit. The proposed Center would be especially valuable to workers displaced by changing markets and new technologies. The traditional production worker and white collar worker will be facing mid-life career changes by choice and by necessity. The Weekend College proposal and the distant learning proposal of the other recommended strategic goals are natural educational alternatives to the clients of the Career Assessment and Change Center.

Two, growth will occur at Cuyahoga Community College as it advances in high technology. A common theme in several suggestions of the Strategic Educational Planning Advisory Committee is the notion that the future of Cuyahoga Community College depends upon our ability to adopt educational programs in the area of advanced technology. Such vital tasks as information processing, manufacturing, transportation, chemical and medical analysis, and communications rely more and more on complex digital electronic systems. Miniaturization, robotics, and computers are revolutionizing the workplace, and will, in turn, make new demands on higher education to produce a workforce skilled in the new technologies. What the recommended strategic goal for State-of-the Art Instructional Delivery Systems says in effect is that we have yet to exploit our own potential for being this area's leader in advanced technology instruction, advanced technology curriculum, and the means of transitioning production workers into advanced technology jobs. The degree to which Cuyahoga Community College can support advanced technology training may very well determine the degree of success the College will have in contributing to models of economic revitalization of Greater Cleveland.

Advanced technology training, youth development, career change assessment services, and greater access to educational programs are the College's investment in the human resources and the economic future of Cuyahoga County.

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